

BOOK REVIEWS

MARIJUANA—E. R. Bloomquist, M.D., The Glencoe Press (A Division of the Macmillan Company), 8701 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, Calif. (90211), 1968. 215 pages, \$1.25 (Paperback).

These days it is incumbent upon every practicing physician to inform himself about *cannibis sativa* whether the variety be *indica*, *americana* or *mexicana*. Dr. Bloomquist's readily readable and widely ranging review provides most of what one needs to know—except perhaps the *smell* of burning "pot"! Marijuana is considered in terms of its easy cultivation almost anywhere in the world and the long history of its use to produce clothing, rope and psychedelic bliss. There is discussion of the current drug "scene" and of the background of the present controversy concerning whether or not the use of marijuana is harmful either to the individual user or to society as a whole. The problems of the teen-age experimenter and the pusher and the law are reviewed with comment.

The book, a paperback, is written by one who knows the subject well and it serves admirably to orient the "square" physician to problems he may expect to encounter sooner or later in his practice, if indeed not in his home. It is too bad that the only illustration of the plant to be found in the book dates from the first century after Christ!

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MEDICAL HISTORY FOR STUDENTS—John R. Green, M.D., Chairman, Barrow Neurological Institute, St. Joseph's Hospital, Phoenix, Ariz., Lecturer, Department of Zoology, History of Medicine, Arizona State University, Tempe, Ariz. Charles C Thomas, Bannerstone House, 301-327 East Lawrence Ave., Springfield, Ill. (62703), 1968. 197 pages, \$9.75.

It is interesting to note that with almost inverse proportionality to the relative decrease in the teaching of the history of medicine in schools of medicine there has been a growing interest in the presentation of the subject as part of the general history of culture to undergraduates and high school students. In recent years, a number of courses have arisen in various colleges and universities and correspondingly short texts in the history of medicine have made their appearance to meet the need. The present text is just such a work. It has evolved from a course given to undergraduate and graduate students at Arizona State College but, as stated in the preface and on the dust-sheet, the book was composed with more ambitious aims and a broader audience in mind "to widen the horizon of general education, to form the foundation for professional knowledge and, fortifying it, to stimulate further study of medical history."

The text follows conventional lines proceeding from primitive and archaic medicine, through the Greco-Roman period, Arabic and Medieval medicine to the Renaissance, thereafter taking up seriatim the progress

made in each century to the twentieth. Nevertheless this is all done in some 177 pages if we exclude the preface, reading list, and index, which is quite a triumph of condensation and surprisingly is, by and large, a well balanced presentation. But in achieving brevity it inevitably suffers in style and conceals in dogmatic and orthodox statements much that is highly controversial. For example, Imhotep is called "a master of medicine" (p. 13) and it is said (p. 15) that his concepts and practices were recorded on papyri one of which "is actually the most important and complete treatise on surgery of all antiquity . . . discovered at Luxor by Edwin Smith in 1862." Such statements, apparently derived from the *speculations* of Professor Breasted, the translator of the Smith Papyrus, are totally without documentary support. Tradition only binds Imhotep to medicine. A thousand years were to elapse (New Empire) before he became a demi-god, and 25 centuries (Saite period) before he was ranked as a god under the title son of Phtah and of Sekhmet, patron of medicine. Similarly we are told categorically (p. 37) that the Etruscans were Hittite invaders who carried with them hepatoscopy as evidenced by the so-called Piacenza liver. However, there is perhaps no more complicated question than the origin of the inhabitants and the cultural overlays of Etruria—Apenninic, Villanovan, Lydian, *Twrws.w* (Turusha), Greek, Chaldean—a case can be made for all, but in recent years the autochthonic theory, that Etruscans are native to Etruria with several secondary cultural overlays, has gained in popularity. There is evidence that the Piacenza as well as the Falerii liver, together with a bronchoscopic calendar based on the liver, were introduced late by Chaldeans who travelled in Italy in the days of Cato and are not evidence of ethnic origins. The reader should be aware of the ambiguities which are many, due doubtless to excessive compression, and of a number of errors of fact such as the date of founding of the University of Edinburgh given in Figure 18 as 1685 (date of the medical school) instead of 1583; the annexation of temples to Sais in 4000 B.C. (p. 19); the description of Estienne's book (p. 73); John Caius as a student of Vesalius (p. 82) which he was not; and several more which will doubtless receive correction in later editions.

The author has done very well in relating the development of medicine to contemporary events considering the small amount of space he has allotted to himself to tell a story which reaches into almost every land and culture over many millenia. Despite its imperfections and the absence of any discussion of biochemistry (the word or its variants do not even appear in the index), the work fulfills very well the needs of the audience to which it is directed as a good introductory text on the history of medicine.

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